

COUNTRY Austria (Soviet Zone)

SECURITY INFORMATION

REPORT NO.

TOPIC Soviet AAA Firing Practice at Apetlon~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

EVALUATION

PLACE OBTAINED

50X1-HUM

DATE OF CONTENT

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25 September 1951

REFERENCES

PAGES

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ENCLOSURES (NO. &amp; TYPE)

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REMARKS

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1. During the firing practice observed at the Apetlon (P 48/Y 74) AAA range until late August 1951, the guns were fired in the daytime at a conic air sleeve, 4 to 5 meters long, which was always towed by the same type of aircraft, a twin-engine plane fitted with in-line engines, a nose compartment projecting rather far forward, rounded-off wings, a trapezoidal rudder assembly, and a high elevator assembly. Light AA guns of about 35-mm fired at sleeves at altitudes of 500 to 600 meters, while heavier AA guns of about 76-mm fired at sleeves at altitudes of 1,000 to 1,200 meters. Not more than one target-towing aircraft was seen aloft. The plane never fired emergency signals. The aircraft approached the firing range at an even altitude. Flights were also made in overcast weather, the plane sometimes disappearing in the clouds. Jet aircraft were not seen.
2. At night, dawn and dusk, one target-towing aircraft used position lamps. The three searchlights available flashed simultaneously, directing their beams to one point. They were usually fired on the target after only 5 or 6 seconds and illuminated the target for about 2 minutes. Two of the searchlights were then switched off, while the third directed its beam vertically into the air. The firing practice observed did not differ much from German procedure. (1)
3. No practice firing whereby the bursts were superimposed on the reflected image of the target plane was observed. The heavy guns usually practiced individually; only seldom was it observed that two of these guns fired simultaneously. The light guns discharged bursts of fire at targets as they were towed past. Combined fire by several light guns was also observed. Night firing was always held with searchlights. No rockets directed by radar were used. The Soviet practice deviated from the German procedure only in that aircraft flying past were usually fired at by one volley followed by concentrated fire from all guns. (2)
4. The bursts did not indicate the calibers of the shells fired. Brown and white bursts were seen. They were usually below or behind the target. No hits were scored in the sleeve target. When two guns fired simultaneously, the bursts were close together, but usually behind the target. (3)

(4)

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Comments.

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- (1) The target-towing plane was an obsolete type, probably the A-20 (Boston). When towing an air sleeve, it is capable of a speed of about 300 km/h. The fact that the target was picked up by the searchlights after only 5 or 6 seconds indicates the use of radar. The guns observed were engaged in routine practice under normal conditions.
- (2) The firing procedure applied was very simple and resembled that in use with the German Air Force in 1934.
- (3) From the locations of the bursts, it is inferred that the fire was directed by well-known ballistic directors.
- (4) Summarizing, it can be stated that the information contained in the report does not indicate the existence of modern AA weapons and fire controls. The description of the firing procedure and the results obtained under simple conditions as well as the fact that the target-towing aircraft refrained from changing altitudes and flying curves are indicative of a poor status of training on the part of the AAA units.

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